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ABSTRACT

Hypercorrection occurs when a speaker of a lower-prestige dialect errs in the use of a form foreign to that dialect within the eyes of a speaker of the higher-prestige dialect from which the form is borrowed. Hypercorrection is sociolinguistically motivated and exists in two forms: (1) hypercorrect-ion, in which an otherwise "correct," more prestigious form is overused by a speaker of a less prestigious dialect; and (2) hyper-correction, the more common form, in which there is an overuse of a process correcting an otherwise "incorrect," less prestigious form. Data from a Pekinese dialect of Mandarin, English, and German are presented to illustrate both forms of hypercorrection. The study of hypercorrection provides information on which to base an understanding of natural sound change. Social, psychological, and phonetic factors may influence this phenomenon. An analysis of hypercorrection aids in isolating the characteristics of each of these factors. Sound change data are presented from Middle and New High German, Pfaelzich, Swabian, and Western Romance languages. It is proposed that the role of hypercorrection in sound change may be inferred even in the relative absence of sociolinguistic data.

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HYPERCORRECTION AND HYPER-CORRECTION IN PHONOLOGICAL CHANGE

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0. Preliminaries.

In his 1922 book *Strandgoot*, the prominent Low German writer Rudolf Kinau tells (p. 17), in the course of recounting some of his youthful reminiscences, the story of how, on his first day of school in Finkenwärder bei Hamburg, he mispronounced, of all things--his own name. This error, however, involved much more than a mere nervous slip of the tongue, for, in fact, it exemplifies a type of phenomenon which, we shall attempt to show in this paper, is of great importance for linguistic theory, especially the theory of phonological change. Even as a young boy, Kinau was aware that there exist sizable and, more importantly, systematic differences between the pronunciation of many words in his native Low German (henceforth LG) and these same words' pronunciation in High German (henceforth HG), the language of school instruction and other instantiations of officialdom; for example, he had noticed that, while he said something like [hu:s] to mean 'house', HG speakers said [haus], and that his (also LG) [mi:n] corresponded to their [ma:n] for 'my'; his [da:x] to their [ta:k] for 'day', and his [to:] to their [tsu:] for 'to'. And, thus, when Rudel (such was Kinau's nickname) was called upon to say what his name was, on the first day of class, his combined knowledge of, on the one hand, these sound-correspondences and, on the other hand, the prestige and, what is more, the propriety of speaking HG in school somehow led him to answer ['rautsel 'kainau]--instead of his usual ['ru:del 'ki:naul], a perfectly acceptable HG name, as well--with a "correction" of (LG) u: to ai, i: to ai, and even a double switch, apparently, of d to t to ts.¹ This kind of overdone, sociolinguistically motivated "correction" is, of course, familiar to linguists as *hypercorrection*, and has occasionally been discussed in the linguistic literature since it was first remarked upon in dialect-geographical studies around the turn of the century,² but it has always, on the whole, received rather cursory treatment, being viewed as an "inorganic and somewhat ephemeral superstructure built onto the firmer foundation of a grammar" (King 1969:71), although, recently, Labov (1972) has integrated it prominently into his theory of linguistic variation and change. It is our contention, however, that hypercorrection merits much closer and more detailed attention from linguists than it has heretofore received, and, thus, hypercorrection forms the sole topic of the present paper.

Here, it is our main concern to demonstrate the importance of hypercorrection by showing that an elaborated account of that phenomenon permits a much more tightly constrained notion of "natural sound-change", since it explains a large number of phonological changes whose nature and/or directionality must otherwise seem quite mysterious and paradoxical. In doing so, we will first define hypercorrection--giving what is; to the best of our knowledge, the first formal definition of the phenomenon--and then proceed to show there are actually two (sub-)types of hypercorrection (as implied by our title), which we also define and then illustrate from several languages; here, we acknowledge the convergence of our independently-arrived-at conclusions with those of two previous, rather neglected researchers, but point out and correct what we believe to be a major defect in their treatments. At that point, we are ready to discuss the role of hypercorrection in sound-change in general, which we do in connection with our proposal that it is sometimes possible to infer the occurrence of hypercorrection in phonological change even in the relative absence of sociolinguistic data; this, we illustrate with two examples--the first (at least to our mind), quite convincing; the second, somewhat more speculative. We conclude with the observation that, without the recognition and proper separation of both social/psychological and "natural"/phonetically motivated aspects of sound-change, it is impossible to provide a satisfactory typology of, much less explanation for, either of them.

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1. Introduction: Definition and Characterization of Hypercorrection.

Over the years, sociolinguists and historical linguists have proposed many different definitions of hypercorrection, these having varying degrees of compatibility due to varying theoretical affiliations and methodological principles. These definitions have suffered from a certain lack of precision, however, in that they have often been ostensive ones or fairly vague characterizations. In the following definition, we attempt to summarize and encompass these other, previous ones in a precise way:

- (1) Hypercorrection is the overgeneralization, by speakers of a less prestigious dialect, of a form which is present in some particular environment/s in a more prestigious dialect and absent from that/those environment/s in the less prestigious dialect to an environment/s where that form is absent (even) from the more prestigious dialect.

This definition can then be formalized as in (2) below; (2), in turn, can then be schematized in the following (3):

- (2) Given a relatively more prestigious dialect D_1 and a relatively less prestigious dialect D_2 , and given that D_1 has a form (of type) X in environment/s (of type) E_1 and a form (of type) Y in environment/s (of type) E_2 , while D_2 has (only) X in both E_1 and E_2 , then hypercorrection may be defined as the occurrence (= use) of Y in E_1 by speakers of D_2 .

- | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| (3) (More prestigious) D_1 | (Less prestigious) D_2 | Hypercorrect D_2 |
| X/E_1 | X/E_1 | Y/E_1 |
| Y/E_2 | X/E_2 | (Y/E_2) |

The parenthesization of Y/E_2 for the hypercorrecting dialect in (2) and (3) above is meant to indicate that what is criterial for hypercorrection is the use of (types of) forms from the prestige-dialect in environments where they are absent from both it and the non-prestige dialect; the use of prestige-dialect forms in the correct (= prestige-dialect) environments is, of course, completely extraneous to the phenomenon of hypercorrection, so that it is in principle possible for there to be hypercorrection without "correction"/correctness. Later on below, we will present some evidence that this potential situation is, in fact, realized. For now, however, we should address ourselves to the mechanism and the motivation for hypercorrection in general.

Hypercorrection, it must be repeated, occurs only when a speaker uses forms foreign to his own native dialect (and errs, from the standpoint of speakers of the dialect whose forms he is attempting to use, in using them); a speaker who learns an originally hypercorrect form from his parents or peers and uses it normally and natively can in no way be said to be hypercorrecting. It is important to stress this perhaps merely terminological-seeming point because it relates to the explanation of the mechanism of hypercorrection itself: the speaker of a less prestigious dialect simply does not have any real competence in those aspects of the more prestigious dialect that differ from his own speech; he is unlikely to entertain the possibility that identical aspects--superficially--of the two dialects are due to different rules (or sets of rules) and is, in fact, unlikely to be at all conscious of the individual similarities between the two, while--more importantly--the differences between the two dialects are apt to be quite striking to him and, thus, to elicit quite specific prestige-dialect imitation-rules from him. That is, precisely because the speaker of a lower-prestige dialect focuses on dissimilarities between his speech and that of higher-prestige-dialect speakers, he is distracted, in the course of attempting to affect the prestigious role of some such dissimilarity, from noticing that his affected way of speaking may thereby introduce new dissimilarities between his (hypercorrect) speech and that of the (true) prestige-dialect.

The fact, then, that lower-prestige-dialect speakers may err in using a rule (in aiming for an output/a form) that is alien to them--and do so at an age long past that of normal first-language learning, most likely--clearly has nothing to do with their (lack of) intelligence and is actually quite understandable and predictable. (Even professional linguists regularly face such problems and make such errors; a case in point is the length of time that it took for the lawfulness of Verner's Law facts to be discovered.)

The social motivation for hypercorrection is every bit as understandable as the mechanism of the process. A quite concise characterization in the words of King (1969: 68-69) is the following:

"The general sociological background of the phenomenon of hypercorrection is well known. It requires a situation in which certain items and casts of speech are recognized as prestige-bestowing. The speaker who hypercorrects desires to acquire the prestige conveyed by this sort of speech, has learned a certain number of rules that bring his speech closer to the prestige norm, but applies these rules incorrectly [= but the rules are not completely correct]."

The prestige-bestowing aspect of speech is central here. While it is clear that prestige-dialects get their prestige from the prestige of the social class of their speakers, and not vice versa, and that this social prestige and class membership consist mainly of wealth, occupation, education, lineage, and the like, still, a person's speech is one of the best indicators of his social class, and it is an indicator--an index, in the semi-otic sense--that can be acquired by mere contact (in fact, only so), without any appreciable expenditure of money or physical effort. Thus, given a chance interpersonal encounter outside of the home and a conversation on a relatively neutral topic, one's speech and one's dress will be the main social indicators--and it is clear which of the two is cheaper and easier to change in order to suggest a certain class-membership. It is probable not only that lower-prestige-dialect speakers try to talk "higher" in order to match or to avoid "disappointing" higher-prestige-dialect speakers, but also that they may do so in order to contrast with or to impress their peers. And, in both cases, they run a high risk of hypercorrection, although the phenomenon is not likely to be noticed by anyone but their social superiors.³ Unfortunately, committing hypercorrection in the latter case may be worse than just speaking one's native, less prestigious dialect, since the former phenomenon is associated with concepts like that of the social climber, upstart, impostor, etc.

These remarks have, of necessity, been quite speculative, but their overall correctness seems to be beyond dispute; the linguistic insecurity and the hypercorrection of the lower middle-class have been extensively documented by Labov (cf. especially Labov 1972:Chapter 5), and this literally "up-tight" attitude vis-à-vis the relative linguistic nonchalance of the higher social classes permits us to end this section with the following (rather extended) analogy. If we view a person's speech, all that he says, as a kind of clothing that he wears, then upper-class speakers--being truly upper-class, regardless of what they "wear"--may get by with rather shoddy dress (witness the popularity of "proletarian" styles in real fashions, from time to time, too); in the story of "The Emperor's New Clothes", the emperor remains monarch throughout, even when he is unclothed. The lower social classes, however, being truly less advantaged, must try to wear elegant garments if they wish to seem socially superior to their actual status, but, since they must don unfamiliar garb in order to give this impression, they are likely to put on too much or to drape themselves strangely--and thus risk ridicule for their hypercorrection when they, say, trip on their cloaks or otherwise look ungainly.

2. Two Types of Hypercorrection.

In our above definition and characterizations of hypercorrection, we have said that the crux of the phenomenon is the overgeneralization of a (type of) form normally absent from a speaker's native dialect by that speaker when affecting the speech of another, more

prestigious dialect where the (type of) form in question is found, but not, of course, in the overgeneralized environment. However, this general situation has two clearly distinguishable (sub-)types, depending on the status of the lower-prestige-dialect form that corresponds to the higher-prestige form which serves as the basis for the hypercorrecting overgeneralization. In one case, the (type of) forms in the less prestigious dialect are not negatively stigmatized; it is merely known that the forms in the more prestigious dialect are different and, hence, somehow more "correct". Here, hypercorrection consists of overdoing the attempt to add prestige to one's speech, of analogizing--on the basis of known prestige-forms--to forms that happen to be lacking in the prestige-dialect. In the other case, however, the (type of) forms in the lower-prestige dialect are negatively stigmatized; their replacement by the (type of) forms in the higher-prestige dialect thus represents a kind of correction. Here, hypercorrection consists of overdoing the attempt to remove stigma from one's speech (-- thereby, in essence, increasing its prestige), whereby one once again analogizes on the basis of known forms, but, this time, by "correcting" forms that are already correct. Since the word correction has only the sense of 'correcting' (or of 'something corrected'), but not that of 'being correct', we may exploit this particularity in devising two alternative hyphenations of the general term hypercorrection in order to designate the two types of hypercorrection, as is done in (4) below:

- (4) Hypercorrect-ion: overuse of an otherwise "correct" (more prestigious) (type of) form.

Hyper-correction: overuse of a process "correcting" an otherwise "incorrect" (less prestigious) (type of) form.

A similar division of hypercorrection into two (sub-)types has also been suggested by DeCamp (1972) and, following him, Zonneveld (1978);⁴ the present study owes much to each of them, though neither of their discussions of hypercorrection has, lamentably, received much, if any, attention from other linguists so far. Especially worthy of note is DeCamp's point (p. 87) that:

"[H]ypercorrection cannot be characterized in purely linguistic terms at all. Hypercorrection may be defined as an incorrect analogy with a form in a prestige dialect which the speaker has imperfectly mastered. Thus it is impossible to determine whether hypercorrection has taken place unless we know the social status of the speaker's dialect relative to the accepted standard of the community."

We will contrast DeCamp's and Zonneveld's two types of hypercorrection with our own in the following two subsections, which illustrate each of the two.

2.1. Hypercorrect-ion.

Whereas we have defined this type of phenomenon as the overuse of a "correct" (type of a) form, DeCamp and Zonneveld have called it a straightforward case of rule-generalization; they view it as the more obvious type of hypercorrection. DeCamp's example (1972: 87) is that of the Pekinese dialect of Mandarin spoken on Taiwan. One well-known characteristic of this dialect is the use of a diminutivizing morpheme which is realized as retroflexion of the stem (diminutivized) morpheme (without there necessarily always being a corresponding semantic diminutivizing, it seems; cf. Swiss German and Modern Spanish); thus, hwa 'painting', hwar '(little) painting'. This morpheme may not be (= is not) added to all words, however; this determination is purely lexical, so that, for example, the homophonous hwa 'speech' has no diminutive. Taiwanese who are not native speakers of the Pekinese dialect, however, if they are somewhat socially pretentious, are apt to retroflex any (other) noun diminutivizingly, thus generalizing the rule in question, says DeCamp, but their e.g. shwō hwar (intended 'speak speech', = 'speak, make a speech') can mean only the nonsensical 'speak a painting' to a genuine Pekinese speaker.

DeCamp and Zonneveld see this as a rule-generalization in that the lexical restric-

tions on the retroflexion-rule (adding diminutive morphemes to stems) have been relaxed; we view it as hypercorrect-ion in that non-diminutivized forms in (any dialect of) Taiwanese Mandarin are not stigmatized, so that over-diminutivizing them represents no real "correction"--one is merely analogizing overmuch to other, existent ("correct") diminutives. Since the retroflexion-rule does not exist at all in the non-Pekinese dialects of Taiwanese Mandarin, it seems questionable to regard its extension to forms not diminutivized in Pekinese as a generalization; rather, it is, in generative terms, a mere case of rule-addition where the rule happens to be more general than that used by native speakers of the prestige-dialect--hence, hypercorrect-ion. We next present two examples of our own for this phenomenon of hypercorrect-ion.

There exist dialects of English that have both of the forms who and whom, but with slightly differing distributions; we may characterize two of these as follows in (5):

(5) Dialect A only:

Dialects A and B:

Dialect B only:

Whom did you give it to?

Who is it?

Who did you give it to?

To whom did you give it?

You gave it to whom?

(For an extensive discussion of these and other dialects regarding English who(m), cf. Klima (1965).) These dialects have been characterized as differing in whether a Case-Marking transformation applies before (Dialect A) or after (Dialect B) Wh-Movement; this ordering makes a difference only in one instance. It has often been observed, though, that speakers of B-type dialects may hypercorrect in wh-questions corresponding to e.g. You said someone called: where speakers of Dialect A would have Who ...?, Dialect-B speakers may say Whom did you say called?. Although this construction may represent no more than a different native-dialect case-marking rule on the part of some speakers of Dialect B (or even of Dialect A), it clearly represents hypercorrect-ion when done by speakers who would natively say Who did you say called?--because who is not negatively stigmatized (at least in all environments). There apparently also exists a Dialect C which has who in all of the sentence-types in (5) above--to the extent that it has pied-piped wh-words at all, in constructions like To who did you give it?. Hypercorrecting speakers of this dialect have occasionally been heard to say things like Whom is it? or Is Professor Whom here?--which, in view of the fact that whom does not exist in their native dialect, is another clear case of hypercorrect-ion for wh-words.

As a third and final example of hypercorrect-ion, we will mention the results of Labov's study of the social stratification of /r/ in New York City (cf. Labov 1972). Labov found that speakers of all social classes did not have [ɹ] for /r/ at least some of the time in every speech-context, but that, except in one case, the higher the socio-economic status of a class was, the greater its percentage of [ɹ] for /r/ was, across all contexts, and that the percentage of [ɹ] (what Labov called "r-fulness") increased with the formality of the context, for all social classes. (The lack of [ɹ] for /r/, or r-lessness, represented lengthening of the preceding vowel or the presence of a centralized glide similar to schwa.) The one exception to these generalizations was the lower middle-class, which, in more formal styles, exceeded even the upper middle-class in r-fulness. In view of his knowledge of the linguistic insecurity of the lower middle-class in general, Labov was led to state (1972:126):

"To describe this phenomenon, the term hypercorrection will be used, since the lower-middle-class speakers go beyond the highest-status group in their tendency to use the forms considered correct and appropriate for formal styles. (This is of course an extension of the usual use of the term to indicate an irregular misapplication of an imperfectly learned rule ..."

Since Labov (1972) makes it extremely clear that r-lessness is not negatively stigmatized--

speakers are not conscious of it as an individual social marker (as they are with [ɔ̃, ə] vs. [d, t], for instance--and since all social classes, even the highest, "drop /r/" to some extent in all stylistic contexts, it is clear that the type of hypercorrection at issue here is hypercorrection; [ɪ] is simply "a prestige marker recently introduced into New York City speech" (Labov 1972:134). (For reasons of space, we have here omitted any diagrammatic representation of the social stratification of /r/ in New York City; the interested reader is hereby referred to Labov (1972:114, 125) and the discussion therein.)

2.2. Hyper-correction.

Here, we have defined hyper-correction as the overuse of a process "correcting" an otherwise "incorrect" (type of) form; this corresponds more or less exactly to DeCamp's "rule symmetry" (1972:88), also adopted by Zonneveld (1978), but seen by him as itself a subcase of a more general process of "rule conversion" (p. 257ff.). An example of this type of hypercorrection has, in fact, already been given in this paper: namely, Rudolf Kinau's mispronunciation of his name as reported in our opening anecdote. Before discussing the nature and proper analysis of this phenomenon, let us provide one more illustration of it, another LG one. In many LG words, intervocalic [k] corresponds to HG [x]; cf. LG maken vs. HG machen 'to make' (in quasi-orthographic transcription); since this feature of LG (as well as the dialect as a whole, to some extent) is negatively stigmatized, it is not surprising that upward-aspiring LG speakers may try to "correct" this "defect" and replace their normal, native [k] with [x]. However, there are other words in which LG [k] corresponds to HG [k]; the HG speaker is able to keep these words (including their [k]'s and [x]'s) straight because learning which words are pronounced which way--what the lexical distribution of intervocalic [k], [x] is--is simply part of learning HG, but the LG native-speaker, of course, has no such knowledge, and so he is likely to hyper-correct by replacing LG [k] with [x] for words where HG also has [k]; cf. LG backen, HG backen, hypercorrect bachen (cf. King 1969:70).

The essence of hyper-correction, then, is the replacement of a lower-prestige-dialect form (often, only one segment in it) that is presumed, on the basis of analogous cases where the lower-prestige dialect differs from the higher-prestige one, to be "incorrect", but where the two dialects do not, in fact, differ--so that the lower-prestige-dialect form is actually "correct" to start with, which makes its "correction" "incorrect" (i.e. hypercorrect). It is clear that the process effecting the hyper-correction can be viewed only as a rule present in the hypercorrecting dialect, but not present in either the native lower- or higher-prestige dialect; on this, all linguists seem to be in agreement (if only because the matter is somewhat definitional). However, DeCamp and Zonneveld view the hyper-correcting process as necessarily the mirror-image of some rule which accounts for the difference between the two dialects in the first place--hence the term "rule symmetry". This is made clear in DeCamp's discussion (1972:88-89) of an /r/-related case of hyper-correction in San Francisco; there, the "dropping" of /r/ is, in fact, stigmatized, as in [fa:m] for [farm] farm, but, unsure of which [a:]'s in their speech are also found in the prestige-dialect, lower-prestige-dialect speakers may sometimes hypercorrectly say things like [paxm] for [pa:m] palm. DeCamp states:

"Socially this is indeed hypercorrection, but what is happening here linguistically? Certainly it is not another simple case of rule generalization, for the relevant rule is r-dropping, which does not carry the prestige necessary to cause generalization. Quite the opposite: it is the failure to r-drop that carries prestige. What is generalized is the converse of the rule. ... Whenever the application of a rule carries strong negative prestige [sic], [instead of its being] dropped from the grammar or even skipped over in the derivation ..., a new rule may be added to the grammar, immediately following the offensive rule and symmetrical to it in form. If this new rule remains perfectly symmetrical, its effect is only to undo the effects of the offensive rule. ... [H]owever ..., it is especially susceptible to rule generalization.

A rule perfectly symmetrical to r-dropping would simply restore the r in exactly those words from which it had been dropped. But how can those particular words be identified? ... The pronunciation parm is thus also a case of rule generalization--not of the original offensive rule but of the symmetrical r-insertion rule."

Unfortunately, this analysis of Decamp's (followed also by Zonneveld) suffers from a number of fundamental defects which make it untenable. First of all, there is the unwarranted postulation of rule-generalization for a rule which never existed at any time in non-generalized form, just as with hypercorrection, discussed above in 2.1.--the "correcting" process which results in hyper-correction does not exist in either the native lower- or higher-prestige dialect, and it is "added to" (=creates) the hypercorrecting dialect in only one state (albeit one too general, from the standpoint of the higher-prestige dialect). But, more importantly, Decamp and Zonneveld are completely wrong in viewing the hyper-correcting process as necessarily the converse of some other rule, for dialect-differences may not always be attributable to different rules (or different rule-formulations or rule-orderings, etc.)--sometimes, they may be due to different lexical/underlying representations, which means that, historically, restructuring has taken place, in at least one dialect. The reason for this is that (generative) phonological rules exist (in order to account) for alternations, and that it is possible for a sound-change to take place such that it gives rise to no alternations. For example, the existence of alternations, in so-called [ɪ]-less dialects like RP, of the type [ka:] car, [ka: kæn] car#can vs. [kaɪ ɪz] car#is justifies the postulation of an "[ɪ]-dropping" rule (roughly $\bar{x} \rightarrow \emptyset / \_C \_0 \# \{C, \emptyset\}$), which means that parm may indeed be due to the operation of a hyper-correcting symmetrical rule in Decamp's sense, but it should be noted that, in an "[ɪ]-less" dialect, [fa:m] can have no underlying /r/, since there are no alternants of that form with [ɪ]. Hence, if a "correcting" process should "restore" an [ɪ] in such a word (regardless of whatever hypercorrections it might also lead to), it would be counteracting only a historical process of [ɪ]-dropping for that morpheme, not a synchronic process that might have been thought to apply to it. And there exist cases of hyper-correction where no synchronic "corrupting" rule can be justified at all--which crucially falsifies the claim that hyper-correction always involves Decamp/Zonneveld rule-symmetry.⁵

For example, Decamp also mentions a case of hyper-correction in San Francisco involving the prestige of the diphthong /iu/ as opposed to /u/: whereas the lower-prestige dialect would have noon news as [nuwn nuwz], and the higher-prestige dialect, as [nuwn niuz], "[t]here used to be a radio announcer there who every day at twelve o'clock would announce the newn nooz [that is, [niun nuwz] ...]" (Decamp 1972:88). Since it is clear that there exists no /iu/ $\rightarrow$ [uw] (or /u(w)/ $\rightarrow$ [iu]) rule in either of the two (non-hypercorrecting) dialects in question, since there are no alternations for such a rule to account for, it is clear that the notion of rule-symmetry is inapplicable and irrelevant here. We conclude, then, that such a notion, while it may apply in some cases, is not part of the essence of hyper-correction--the overuse of a process "correcting" an otherwise "incorrect" form/s, as we have defined and characterized it. Having defined and illustrated, now, both types of hypercorrection, we may proceed to our examples of the important role of the phenomenon in general in the description, explanation--and actuality--of phonological change--but only, however, after we address some brief remarks to the phenomenon of "hyper-correction without 'correction'", a promise to say something about which was made above.

The observant reader will have noticed that the hyper-correcting San Francisco newscaster mentioned above did not say [niun niuz], but [niun nuwz], replacing /u(w)/ with /iu/ once where he shouldn't have, and not replacing it once where he should have. This is precisely "hypercorrection without 'correction'" (which we will henceforth discuss without any quotation-marks), a phenomenon which the author has also observed in several speakers of different languages and dialects. The case which is best known to us is that of a New Yorker who, it appears, regularly "drops his [ɪ]'s", but also adds [ɪ]'s at the end of

(apparently all) schwa-final words, even when they are not in hiatus.⁶ This speaker thus has [ɪ]-less further vs. [ɪ]-ful diva, sofa, tuba, (Santa) Monica, etc.; in fact, he also has [ɪ] in both idear and idears (for idea, ideas), although these forms may be lexically unique for him. While it is possible that this speaker also (at least occasionally) corrects as well as hypercorrects, but that an [ɪ]-ful, say, further from him escapes the author's notice (he is a natively [ɪ]-ful speaker himself), we would at least like to suggest that hypercorrection (that is, hyper-correction) without correction is in principle possible, and to encourage other researchers to report any findings of their own which may bear on this possibility. The phenomenon seems to be especially prevalent in second-language-learning situations: the author has heard French 'eadhache for headache, 'owhever for however, Germanic/Slavic [v]ine comes from a [w]ine, [v]hy don't you drink some more [w]odka?, and the like (similar observations have also been made regarding Cockney English).

3. Hypercorrection and Diachronic Phonology.

The notion of hypercorrection arose, as we stated at the outset of this paper, near the turn of the century in the course of dialect-geographical studies made by the Neogrammarians, their opponents, and other contemporaries in order to assess the validity of the claim that all sound-change is regular. Hypercorrection was but one of a number of factors which were postulated in order to explain certain irregularities in sound-change; in this respect, it could be grouped with (dialect) borrowing, on the one hand, as a type of dialect-interference phenomenon, and with other types of analogy, on the other hand, as a type of psychological phenomenon, both of which types could then, it was argued, safely be excluded from the set of phenomena to be accounted for by the theory of sound-change proper, since it was essentially phonetic, while they were socio-psychological. This was, of course, not the only interpretation of the data that the dialect-geographical and other studies yielded; proponents of the primacy of socio-psychological factors in sound-change were able to make themselves heard, and, in any case, it was not clear that the claim that sound-change was regular except when it was not was much of a claim at all, anyway. In any event, subsequent research on sociolinguistic variation (cf. e.g. Labov) and on lexical diffusion (cf. e.g. Wang 1969 and subsequent papers by him and his colleagues) has tended to give the coup de grâce to the Neogrammarian claim that sound-change always affects an entire speech-community in a uniform manner, but it has simultaneously turned up a good deal of evidence regarding the phonetics of sound-change (including articulatory, acoustic, and auditory phonetics; here, cf. especially the work of Ohala and his co-workers, e.g. Ohala 1974) that suggests the existence of a hierarchy of possible sound-changes such that some are more "natural", more likely, while others are less "natural", less likely. Given this fact, it again becomes important to determine exactly what the natural sound-changes are that provide the material for socio-psychological factors to operate on (constraining the latter, to at least a certain extent, by their very nature), and thus it again becomes crucial to ascertain which sound-changes are due to the operation of hypercorrection, so that the data on the substance and directionality of such changes will not contaminate, as it were, the set of data for determining natural sound-changes.

In many cases, of course, especially in more recent times, it is possible to collect ample sociolinguistic evidence that serves to document the occurrence of hypercorrection. In many other cases, however, even when written records are not lacking, the evidence which would conclusively prove hypercorrection to have been at work is not available. Nevertheless, it is our contention that it is occasionally possible to find strong circumstantial evidence for hypercorrection, even in the relative absence of sociolinguistic data. That is, even without documentation for the social distribution of linguistic facts in some specific instance, the establishment of the relative prestige of dialects in general and the facts of the origin and spread of some particular phonological change may permit us to make a strong inferential case for hypercorrection. The rest of this paper is devoted to two such inferred cases of hypercorrection. Before presenting them, we would like to clarify our reasons for believing that identifying hypercorrection in phonological change

holds special promise as regards constraining the notion "natural sound-change": The very naturalness of natural sound-changes, we believe, makes them extremely susceptible to stigmatization as "careless" or "sloppy" pronunciations, and, while it is difficult, if not impossible, to predict which such pronunciations will, in actual fact, be stigmatized, still, once such stigmatization occurs, it is very likely that hypercorrection will occur--in fact, hyper-correction, which means that a "correcting" process with exactly the opposite directionality (an unnatural directionality) to the natural change in question takes place, quite probably being extended to forms which were not derived by the natural change in the first place, and perhaps also being borrowed into other dialects where the natural sound-change at issue is only weakly, or even not at all, represented. Hence, the phonological changes that hypercorrection accounts for are precisely those that are most apt to be problematic for a theory of natural sound-changes, since they will often be the exact opposite of other, bona-fide natural changes. We now turn to what we will argue to be such a case.

3.1. HG b > w, w > b Changes and the Swabian Dialect.

From Middle HG (henceforth MHG) to Early New HG (henceforth ENHG), there took place an extremely natural and common sound-change whereby original orthographic b became w word-internally; phonetically, this represented [b] > [v], probably via an intermediate stage of [β]--this change took place in all of the *binnendeutsche* ('central' or 'interior German') dialects except Swabian, report Paul/Moser/Schröbler (1969:94). On this point, the modern standard dialect of HG followed the more peripheral dialects of MHG and ENHG, which retained the b. The change in question may be illustrated with the following forms from the standard NHG language (in modern orthography) and forms from Pfälzisch, a Rhenish Franconian dialect (in popular orthography):

(6) Standard NHG:	aber	Pfälzisch:	aw(w)er	'but'
	über		iw(w)er	'over'
	liebe		liewe	'dear'
	Buben		Buwe	'boys'
	Abend		Owend	'evening'
	treiben		treiwen	'to drive, propel'
	halbe		halwi	'half'
	selber		selwer	'oneself'
	Arbeit		Arwet	'work'

(Differences between the two dialects other than the one mentioned above are irrelevant for our present purposes.)

However, not only did the above change not take place in Swabian (located almost exactly in the southwest corner of the German dialect-area); Swabian is also the first MHG dialect in which another change involving b and w "first becomes visible" (Paul/Moser/Schröbler 1969:101; my translation--RDJ), at the end of the thirteenth century: namely, MHG w > ENHG b (phonetically [v] > [b]) after l and r ([l] and [r]). Thus, we have:

(7) MHG:	gëlbes	NHG:	gelbes	'yellow'
	milwe		Milbe	'midge, mite'
	swalwe		Schwalbe	'swallow (bird)'
	alwære		albern	'silly'
	garwe		Garbe	'sheaf; yarrow'
	mürwe		mürbe	'mellow; brittle'
	narwe		Narbe	'scar'
	sparwære		Sperber	'sparrow-hawk'
	varwe		Farbe	'color'

w > b also occurred--for no apparent reason (Paul/Moser/Schröbler 1969:101)--in:

(8) MHG:	âventiure	NHG:	Abenteuer	'adventure'
	hiewen		hieben	'hewed, struck (plural)'
	îwe		Eibe	'yew (tree)'

Here, we would argue, we can use the circumstantial evidence at our disposal to make a good case for the operation of hyper-correction in these sound-changes. First of all, there is a natural sound-change that occurs in all of the members of a particular dialect-group except one; also, perhaps not so coincidentally, this same dialect is the locus of the origin and spread of another sound-change that is exactly opposite to the first, except that it has a slightly more limited environment. (We find it not at all unexpected that this more unnatural change takes place in the most natural environment available to it: namely, after l and r; as we stated before, it seems to be the case that even socio-psychological changes are somewhat constrained by considerations of phonetic naturalness.) And, in a small number of lexically limited cases, exactly the opposite phonological change is found. Second of all, a perusal of the known facts of German history circa 1300 reveals the following sociologically relevant information: From 1155 to 1250, the emperors of the Holy Roman Empire were Hohenstaufens--members of a Swabian dynasty; they were extremely successful in political and religious affairs, including crusades, and had strong popular support; among them were Frederick I Barbarossa, Henry VI, also King of Sicily, and Frederick II, crowned King of Jerusalem. After the struggles of the Great Interregnum (1250-1273), power passed to the house of Habsburg, which had its major possessions in Austria and Styria, but whose first member to be Holy Roman Emperor, Rudolf, turns out to have started his career as a minor count of Swabia and was a Swabian. Furthermore, Swabia was the scene of much of the production of much of the courtly literature of MHG, and, at a time when French influence and loanwords were pouring into Germany, Swabian was the dialect via which these were radiated out into the other German dialects. Thus, it does not seem rash to assert the probable sociolinguistic prestige of Swabian during the late 1300's, as well as before and after (especially the former). Our overall conclusion is, then, that the natural, central German phonological change b > w somehow became stigmatized in Swabia c. 1300, and that a hyper-correcting process w > b, mainly operative in the environment after r and l, spread, as a result of Swabian prestige, to the other dialects of German (mainly East Middle German) that later formed the basis for the modern standard HG language.

We conclude this paper with a much more speculative hypothesis concerning inferred hypercorrection in sound-change, the change in question being prothesis in Western Romance. Space-limitations prevent us from providing much detail regarding this phenomenon; for further particulars and for references, the reader is referred to Lausberg (1967:26-28). We are able to say the following: Latin s + C(onsonant) developed a prothetic e in Western Romance; thus, we have correspondences of Latin, Spanish, French, etc. like schola, escuela, école for 'school'; spîritus, espîritu, esprit for 'spirit'; stâtus, estado, état for 'state', etc. Prothesis did not occur in Italian or in any Eastern Romance dialect, however. While various explanations for this prothesis have been advanced, over the years--syllable-boundary-shift followed by a need to support the vowel; a tendency toward consonant-cluster simplification; substrate-influence/language-contact and -interference, to name a few--we find none of them satisfactory, and would like to propose another one, one based on a kind of hypercorrection. Our suggestion is that, regardless of whether the innovating speakers had Romance as their native dialect, the prothetic innovation occurred when [s(:)]C- was reinterpreted as its near homophone [es]C- and the "reduced" devoiced [ç] was then "restored" to its original full state. This suggestion is perhaps bolstered by its correlation with the fact that Western Romance dialects with prothesis lack geminate consonants, while the Romance dialects with geminate consonants (like Italian) lack prothesis; that is, the reanalysis hypothesized above may have been motivated, where it occurred, by the loss of geminate consonants, which would have left a long or intense [s] (before a consonant) particularly anomalous. Here, however, we have

no evidence whatsoever regarding the social setting of the proposed hyper-correction, nor even of any particular widespreadness of the natural process [es] > [ʒs] > [s(:)] in those times, so that we must repeat that our hypothesis regarding Western Romance prothesis is totally speculative. The other hypotheses made regarding it, however, do not seem any less so.

The concluding of the previous example brings us to the end of what we set out to do in this paper: we have defined hypercorrection in general, defined and illustrated its two subtypes, hypercorrect-ion and hyper-correction, and given two instances where we believe that an indirect case can be made for inferring the operation of hypercorrection in phonological change (whereby we may mention that, contra DeCamp and Zonneveld, we find hyper-correction to be by far the more common type of hypercorrection). We have done so because we believe that there are separate factors operating in sound-change--social, psychological, and phonetic--and that the true explanation of phonological change involves referring to each of the three at some time or another, which means that, in order to determine the contribution of each, it is necessary to isolate their characteristics as best one can; and because hypercorrection seems to us to be a productive phenomenon for the application of this approach. We hope to have convinced the reader of this.

Footnotes

1. We owe the reference to Kinau's story (as well as an extensive and excellent discussion of it) to King (1969:69-71), who, in turn, owes the reference (and a short discussion) to Hermann (1931:37).
2. As regards terminology, Gillieron and the French since him use fausse régression ('false regression'), and some English-speaking linguists also use hyperurbanism; the Germans seem to use Hyperkorrektur and Hyperurbanismus as well as Überentäußerung (= 'over-de-expression or -utterance') (cf. Hermann 1931:38, DeCamp 1972:87).
3. To the best of our knowledge, no one has ever made much of the possibility that hypercorrectors do what they do perhaps largely out of a (perhaps unconscious) desire to impress and exceed their peers, yet this would seem to be an avenue by which hypercorrection could spread rapidly, and unchecked by the monitoring of the higher classes.
4. Labov (1972) has also divided hypercorrection into two subtypes--from above and from below--but this division has to do with whether or not one is hypercorrecting toward a norm outside or inside, respectively, one's social class, and not with the actual mechanism or motivation of the change.
5. Hogg (1978:260-262) makes more or less the same point in a critical discussion of hypercorrection as exemplified by Saporta's (1965) Spanish example.
6. The possibility of [ɪ]-retention in hiatus is, of course, related to the phenomenon of [ɪ]-insertion in hiatus (so-called "intrusive [ɪ]"), which is, in turn, related to the issue of rule-inversion (cf. the brief mention of it above). With Zonneveld (1978), we would point out that hyper-correction (what DeCamp and Zonneveld term rule symmetry) differs from rule-inversion in that, in the former, the environment of the "correcting" rule is the same as that of the "corrupting" one (whether it be a synchronic rule or a historical process that is now fossilized in restructurings), while, in the latter, there is a switch to the complement of the environment of the original rule. For an illustration of this latter point and an extensive discussion of rule-inversion, cf. Venemann (1972).

We should also take this opportunity to point out that our brief and rather critical discussion of Zonneveld's (1978) treatment of hypercorrection has not at all done justice to his detailed and insightful handling of that topic, whatever its flaws. The reader is particularly referred to his integration of hypercorrection into a theory of competing sound-changes (pp. 261-277). The present author hopes to prepare a review-type discussion of Zonneveld (1978) sometime in the near future.

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